

CASE STUDY

RIEDEL COMMUNICATIONS' MISSION CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ENSURES SUCCESS FOR THE WORLD'S BIGGEST EVENTS



If there is a major event taking place somewhere in the world, there is good chance Riedel Communications is working onsite. And, even though you've probably never heard of Riedel, the work done by this German tech company is essential to the event taking place.

Riedel designs, manufactures, and distributes real-time networks for video, audio, and communications. Riedel solutions are the reason events like football World Cups, Summer and Winter Games, the Eurovision Song Contest, or the G20 Leaders Summit go ahead without a hitch.

"Everything at an event needs to be connected – and Riedel provides that connection," says Julius Steffens, Junior Product Manager, Riedel Communications. "Where you find signals and communication, we're in the game."



A MISSION CRITICAL ROLE IN EVENT SUCCESS

Riedel's involvement is mission critical. As almost everything onsite now runs on IP, from radios, comms, signal distribution, cameras, and data sensors to CCTV, it is crucial Riedel has a secure, performant network in place. With some of these events being planned months, if not years, in advance, Riedel needs to have a kit list in place accordingly. But it then needs to plan for every eventuality.

"There is the agreed plan, then there is the reality," says Jörn Seifert, Senior Network Engineer (Event Security), Riedel Communications. "With events, things change, often at the last minute. We usually only know the true requirements once we arrive onsite."

Riedel needs a network infrastructure capable of being deployed onsite quickly, and without fail. It needs to be scalable enough to span events with 100 people onsite, to those with more than 400,000. And it needs to be easy to manage.

REQUIREMENTS

- Maintain leadership position in event business through adoption of latest technology
- Allow flexibility to accommodate last minute changes on site
- Ensure flawless connectivity at event locations worldwide

SOLUTION

- Wi-Fi 5 & Wi-Fi 6 Indoor & Outdoor APs
- 7200 Series Mobility Controllers
- Aruba Campus switches
- ClearPass for access control
- AirWave for network management

OUTCOMES

- Delivers robust, mission critical connectivity at every event, in any location
- Simplifies network management, with the same approach and architecture, for events ranging from 100 to 400,000 people
- Allows Riedel to manage multiple user groups, and react to changes during an event
- Offers pathway to cloud-management, enabling remote management of global events from its head office in Germany
- Strengthens engagement with world leading network solutions partner, clarifying technology roadmap

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JÖRN SEIFERT

SENIOR NETWORK ENGINEER (EVENT SECURITY),
RIEDEL COMMUNICATIONS

Centralised control, with on-the-ground flexibility

Aruba is an integral part of Riedel's operations and is central to Riedel's success for numerous projects. Riedel has diverse customers such as race car series (DTM), music festivals (Wacken, Electric Love), events (Eurovision Song Contest) and many sports leagues such as the German Football League (DFL).

There is a broad range of Aruba components involved which have been designed in and deployed by long-time Aruba Gold Partner Bohnen IT. This includes Aruba 2930 switches, Aruba 300 Series access points, 7200 Controllers, and Aruba AirWave network management. Riedel is also one of the first customers to take the 802.11ax (or Wi-Fi 6) wireless standard with the Aruba 500 Series APs. Bohnen IT continues to provide ongoing support.

Arguably, the most important element is the use of Aruba Mobility Conductor. Mobility Conductor simplifies Riedel's management of multiple Aruba controllers running ArubaOS 8 or later. It includes a centralised dashboard to easily see and manage controllers, configuration hierarchy to customise deployments for various sites, and live firmware and feature upgrades. This enables Riedel to improve network reliability during active user sessions.



Ease of deployment, ease of management

For Riedel, this equates to a global solution that is easy to deploy and easy to manage. It gives the business long term certainty of equipment performance and reliability, with the flexibility to change things quickly on the ground, as the event requires.

"From a technical perspective, Aruba Mobility Conductor is absolutely key," says Seifert. "It allows us to react immediately to changes onsite. This flexibility and ease of deployment, is only possible with Aruba."

On the ground realities mean access points have to be placed where possible, not always where is ideal. Seifert says, "Riedel will always install two more than is necessary, rather than two less. The advantage of the Aruba solution is, once designed properly, we can scale up or down really easily. We can expand horizontally or vertically, whether it is an event for 100 people or 400,000. It's the same management layer."

CONSISTENT PERFORMANCE, EVERY TIME

Above all, the Aruba approach works. Riedel grows its business on the back of a reputation for excellence; that Aruba does not fail means Riedel does not fail.

"We've been working with several global auto racing series for more than 25 years. Over this time, we have built a lot of trust," says Serkan Güner, Riedel spokesperson. "The part we play in these series is absolutely mission critical, so there's no room for failure."

The people relying on Riedel technology include pit crews communicating with their factories or their drivers lapping at 150mph,

journalists and broadcasters livestreaming from ringside at the Anthony Joshua title fight, or event teams deploying onsite emergency evacuation notices.

"The Summer or Winter Games' opening ceremonies are not going to pause because we're not ready," adds Steffens.

Global support, when it's needed

Clients expect a lot from Riedel. Riedel adopts a similar approach with its suppliers.

"It is not unusual for there to be a late change to an event's technical rider," says Steffens. "We then call Aruba asking for 200 extra switches and 500 extra access points – and they need to be onsite yesterday."

Aruba's ability to connect global chains, not just its solution strengths, is critical.

"We're also actively involved in product development discussions. As our industry evolves, and more work migrates to IP and the cloud, we need Aruba to have solutions ready for us," says Steffens. "We feel like these discussions are helping shape Aruba's future."

Increasing trust in cloud

Short-term, Riedel wants to enable more network functions to be managed from its Wuppertal headquarters in Germany. The goal, explains Steffens, is to be able to run events, wherever they are in the world, with minimal feet on the ground. This will have a positive impact on costs, carbon, and control.

"It costs a lot to send highly-trained network engineers all round the world. It's time consuming and it can be stressful. In an ideal world we would be able to manage much of their job function from a consistent, central location. But that requires the industry to fully trust cloud-based solutions. We will always need a fallback position."

This day is close, adds Seifert. He compares the event industry to the data centre business of ten years ago. "There is caution, but we're moving in the right direction. It is our role to show the industry what is possible."

